

older brothers and sister were raised in a loving home by parents that worked very hard to provide for their children. Rennie, as he was affectionately known, grew up like most of us. He had many friends, loved playing basketball, just a normal childhood growing up. He is described by his sister Lelia as "just a charming little boy."

Rennie attended school at the Lincoln School in Middlesboro, long since gone. In the days of segregation, it was the only school in Middlesboro for black children. He was a good student, very popular among his classmates and known for his sense of humor. Bill Smith, a longtime friend of the Gayles family, described Rennie as "a solid guy with a good head on his shoulders."

Rennie was also a very talented athlete who played football, baseball, and was an especially gifted basketball player. With the end of segregation, he then attended Middlesboro High School, where he graduated in 1964.

Offered a scholarship by Knoxville College to play basketball, he declined. Instead, young Gayles enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. With his older brother David serving in the U.S. Air Force, and Bobby serving in Vietnam in the U.S. Army, I suppose he felt he was obligated to enlist. He received his basic training at Parris Island, South Carolina, and upon completion was stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He later transferred to a Marine base in California. He quickly rose through the ranks and became a corporal in just two years. He was an attentive soldier and took his obligation to the Corps very seriously. He was a "textbook" Marine. Tough, no-nonsense and cared deeply about those he served with.

"Everybody in our platoon knew the outstanding recruit was a black kid from Middlesboro, Ky., Lorenza Gayles," writes Alvin Simpson, author of "Distant Shore: A Memoir," and fellow Marine recruit in basic training with Rennie.

"There was no question who could outfight whom; I knew, he knew, and the entire platoon knew Lorenza was the real deal."

With the war in Vietnam escalating, Rennie was deployed on June 21, 1966. Just over two months after arriving in Vietnam, while on a reconnaissance patrol, Rennie was on point (front man in the squad) when he and the other members of his squad walked into an ambush. He was killed instantly.

THE WAR

With the war in Vietnam so many years behind us, many have tried to put it out of their minds. But for those who served and the family members who lost loved ones there, it haunts them every day. Deemed an unpopular war, many returning Vietnam veterans were scorned, cursed, called "baby killers," and spat upon. The truth is, no war is popular. War is, sometimes, just a necessary evil. This great nation has long carried the obligation to protect and defend those who cannot defend themselves against oppressions that exist in this world. And to the over 58,000 soldiers that died and 1,300 still listed as missing in action, we owe our eternal gratitude.

As a child growing up in the 1960s and early 1970s, the war in Vietnam to me was sitting beside my father watching the nightly news with Walter Cronkite. With the end of each broadcast came the body count, the dead, the wounded and the missing in action. Today, newscasts are filled with coverage of brave men and women memorialized who have given their lives, and those troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan as they are met at airports across the country by cheering crowds and hailed as heroes and glorified as they should be. They have dedicated their lives to protect and serve this nation as sol-

diers, and are prepared to give their lives for it.

We owe the same gratitude to those who served in Vietnam. We all know someone who served there and the memories of these heroes are fleeting. These men and women served with the same courage and dedication as do the brave soldiers of today. We see them every day. Take just a moment to thank them for their service and their sacrifice; just a pat on the back and a thank you would mean so much. Most of all, take a moment to remember, honor and mourn those who gave their lives for this great nation. Our community lost too many fine young men in Vietnam and it's up to us to pass on their heritage so that they are not forever lost to posterity. Remember that many of these men and women sacrificed their ambitions so that we wouldn't have to. They died for the very freedoms we enjoy every day.

When Rennie was killed in action in Vietnam I remember my mother saying "that poor little Gayles boy." This is something that I have carried with me my entire life. And with the passing of time and generations we owe it to them to carry on their memories. This tall, handsome, young Marine with his broad beaming smile, with his whole life ahead of him, he was one of those men.

Rennie Gayles is not just a housing project; United States Marine Corporal Lorenza Gayles was a guardian of freedom.

REMEMBRANCE

Forty-five years ago, on September 3, 1966, just before your twentieth birthday, in a country, half a world away from home, in the Quang Nam Province of South Vietnam defending your nation with a profound sense of duty and exemplary conduct becoming a United States Marine, you made the ultimate sacrifice. Every day of my life I will thank God for you, I will honor you, and I will remember you . . . Semper Paratus.

On October 26, 1966, Corporal Lorenza Gayles was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart. It was presented to his parents by Major F.C. Fisher, U.S.M.C. Corporal Gayles is buried in the Lynch Cemetery in Middlesboro.

Sincerest appreciation to those who contributed to this article: Rennie's brother, Bobby Gayles of Middlesboro; Bill Smith, U.S. Army (Ret.), of Middlesboro; sister Lelia Gayles-Cammon, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Alvin L. Simpson of Columbus, Ohio, for your friendship, encouragement, service to our nation and loving tribute to your friend; and a special thanks to Sgt. Timothy Moos and the United States Marine Corps.

DREAM ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 10 years ago, I introduced the DREAM Act, legislation that would allow a select group of immigrant students with great potential to contribute more fully to America.

The DREAM Act would give these students a chance to earn legal status if they came to the U.S. as children, are long-term U.S. residents, have good moral character, graduate from high school, and complete 2 years of college or military service in good standing.

The DREAM Act would make America a stronger country by giving these talented immigrants the chance serve in our military and contribute to our economy.

Tens of thousands of highly-qualified, well-educated young people would en-

list in the Armed Forces if the DREAM Act becomes law.

And studies have found that DREAM Act participants would contribute literally trillions of dollars to the U.S. economy during their working lives.

These young people have overcome great obstacles to succeed. They are valedictorians, star athletes, honor-roll students, and ROTC leaders. Now they want to give back to their country. The DREAM Act would give them that chance.

For the last 10 years I have been working on the DREAM Act, there has been one constant: strong support from the faith community. The DREAM Act is supported by almost every religious group you can imagine: Catholic, Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Evangelical Christians; Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews; and Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs.

The faith community supports the DREAM Act because it is based on a fundamental moral principle that is shared by every religious tradition—it is wrong to punish children for the actions of their parents.

These students were brought to this country as children. They grew up here pledging allegiance to the American flag and singing the only national anthem they've ever known. They are American in their hearts and they should not be punished for their parents' decision to bring them here.

For the next several weeks, people of faith all across this country will show their support for the DREAM Act by celebrating the first-ever "DREAM Sabbath."

On the DREAM Sabbath, at churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples around the country, Americans of many religious backgrounds will offer prayers for the immigrant students who would be eligible for the DREAM Act. At many of these events, these DREAM Act students will tell their stories.

The DREAM Sabbath will take place over several weekends in September and October, and so far, there are more than 320 DREAM Sabbath events planned, in 44 States.

In June, when I announced the DREAM Sabbath, I was joined by religious leaders from a great variety of faith traditions, including: Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, a good friend who has been a leader in the fight for immigration reform for many years; Bishop Minerva Carcaño, the first Hispanic woman to be elected bishop in the Methodist Church; Reverend Samuel Rodriguez, the president of the Nation's largest Hispanic Christian organization, with more than 30,000 member churches; Reverend Derrick Harkins, the pastor of one of the most prominent African-American churches in our Nation's Capitol, who was representing the National Association of Evangelicals; Bishop Richard Graham of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Bishop David Jones of the Episcopal Church; Rabbi Lisa

Grushcow of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society; and Imam Mohamed Magid, the head of the Nation's largest Muslim organization.

The DREAM Sabbath events reflect this great religious diversity. Let me give you just a few examples of the congregations who are observing the DREAM Sabbath: the First Presbyterian Church of Cheyenne, WY; the Central United Methodist Church in Fairmont, WV; the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, NE; Galloway Memorial Episcopal Church in Elkin, NC; Grace United Methodist Church in Missoula, MT; Trinity Episcopal Church in Winner, SD; the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; the Florida Catholic Conference of Bishops; and the following Catholic dioceses, just to name a few: Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland, OH; Davenport, IA; Evansville, IN; and Salt Lake City, UT. Just last night, in Tucson AZ, the DREAM Sabbath was recognized at the National Hispanic Evangelical Immigration Summit, a gathering of 1,200 Evangelical ministers. This summit was convened by Reverend Sam Rodriguez and the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference and I want to thank them for their leadership.

In my home State of Illinois, I plan to observe the DREAM Sabbath at a number of places, including: Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation, a Modern Orthodox temple, where, by the way, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is a congregant; Old St. Pats Church, my home parish in Chicago; and the Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumburg.

I would like to invite all of my colleagues and everyone listening today to participate in the DREAM Sabbath. If you are interested in becoming part of this important national movement, you can visit www.dreamsabbath.org for more information or call my office at 202-224-2152.

The DREAM Sabbath will put a human face on the plight of undocumented students who grew up in this country and help build support for passage of the DREAM Act.

DREAM Act students need our prayers, but they need more than that—they need our help to pass the DREAM Act.

These young people are American in their hearts. They are willing to serve our country, if we would only give them a chance. Passing the DREAM Act is the right thing to do and it will make America stronger.

HUNGER AWARENESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of the over 50 million people, including over 17 million children in the United States, who face the day not knowing if they will have enough to eat.

Millions of families live each day not knowing if and how they will put food on the table.

Rather than thinking about what the next meal will be, these parents worry if there will be a next meal.

Rather than concentrate on homework, these children are trying not to think about their hunger pangs.

According to the USDA in 2010, 14.5 percent of households—or 1 in 6 Americans—experienced hunger. This is the highest level of hunger in our Nation since the government began tracking food insecurity in 1995.

No State or county is immune to the reality of hunger. In Illinois' three wealthiest congressional districts an average of 13.2 percent of people—or nearly 281,000 people—experienced hunger in 2009.

Hunger is a reality in all of our communities. We see it in the long lines at our food pantries. We have heard from seniors forced to choose between groceries and medication. And children are in our schools who have not had a decent meal since the previous day's school lunch.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported this month that more than 1.82 million people lived in poverty in Illinois last year. That's up from 1.69 million in 2009—making 2010 the third straight year the poverty rate in Illinois has risen.

According to Feeding America in Illinois, nearly 1.9 million people—including over 740,000 children—are food insecure and often rely on safety net programs for their next meal.

Hunger is a symptom of poverty, and where this is poverty we see greater demand for emergency food programs and support. Federal food assistance programs have responded to the growing need by helping low and middle-class families, children, and seniors maintain a healthy diet.

Throughout the country, food banks and pantries that rely on Federal assistance are the front line of the fight against hunger—providing emergency food assistance to hungry families.

Unfortunately, business at food banks has never been better. Over the past 2 years, Illinois food banks have seen a 50 percent increase in requests for food assistance. In 2009, Illinois food banks provided food to 1 in 10 residents.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps, is one of the Nation's most important antihunger programs. SNAP has provided over 46 million Americans with essential food assistance.

In Illinois, 1.8 million people—that is 1 in 7 residents—rely on SNAP benefits to buy the food they need.

The benefits of SNAP reach far beyond helping households maintain a healthy diet. SNAP is a powerful tool in fighting poverty, and has lifted nearly 2.5 million children out of poverty, more than any other government program.

According to the USDA's Economic Research Service, \$5 of SNAP benefits can generate \$9 in economic activity through retail demand, farm production, and jobs.

At a time when families are having trouble making ends meet, food stamps meet a basic human need.

The people using food banks or food stamps to get by are people you know—your neighbor and coworker.

I recently heard from a single mother of a 4-year old daughter who receives emergency food assistance from the Eastern Illinois Food Bank.

This young mother is also a full-time college student, who plans to use her education to provide a better life for her family.

Without the extra support from food stamps, this woman says she would have to drop out of college and work at a minimum wage job just to make ends meet.

She credits food stamps for not only providing food assistance, but for allowing her to get an education so she can move her family out of poverty.

As Congress works to rein in our Nation's debt, we will hear from all sides. The millions of Americans who rely on safety net antihunger programs like SNAP will not have the loudest voice in the debate or big PR firms, but we can't forget them.

We must protect Federal food assistance programs. These programs are not a giveaway or a handout. They are strengthening our economy and improving the lives of vulnerable families, children, and seniors at their time of need.

MORETOWN POST OFFICE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to bring to the attention of the Senate a notable development in the community of Moretown, VT. Moretown is located near the confluence of the Mad River and the Winooski River, just down the road from my home in Middlesex, and the community was hit particularly hard by the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene. Homes were flooded, the town offices were inundated, and the Moretown School was damaged. Bridges were washed away, cutting the town off from central Vermont's highway system, and leaving some residents stranded. But through this disaster, the town pulled together, in yet another of the many stories that can be told of the great resilience shown by Vermonters in the storm's terrible aftermath.

As flood waters rose, the postmaster in charge of the Moretown Post Office, Naomi Tilton, and the two carriers who work in the Moretown Post Office managed to save every piece of mail from the rising flood waters. Every single piece of mail in their charge. Water eventually filled the entire post office lobby, and as water damage left by the flooding in Moretown demonstrated, as much as 8 feet of water filled the first floors of structures surrounding the post office.

When my staff visited the Moretown Post Office a week later, workers had already begun renovating the building.